

*undulatus*) was discovered just upstream in the Orange County reach of the North Fork (McGrath, 1991). Shells of yellow lampmussels, notched rainbows and elliptos were also found during this inventory as far downstream as the Little River Gorge, and still more species may be found if a more intensive survey is conducted (the survey by McGrath did not extend below the confluence of the two forks).

In addition to the mussels, 36 species of fish have been recorded within the Little River (Menhinick, 1991), including eight species—all shiners or darters—that are indicators of high quality waters. The most noteworthy species is the mimic shiner (*Notropis volucellus*), which has been recorded from only a few sites within the Piedmont. The Roanoke bass (*Ambloplites roanokensis*), which is endemic to the Neuse, Tar and Roanoke drainages, has also been recorded, as have otters (*Lutra canadensis*), queen snakes (*Regina septemvittata*) and red-bellied watersnakes (*Nerodia erythrogaster*), a predominantly Coastal Plain species that may have strayed up into the Little River Reservoir from the Triassic Basin.

Eleven species of forest interior, neotropical migrants were recorded on one visit made to the Little River Gorge late in the nesting period (24 June); given the quality of the forests along the slopes, still more species should be expected to occur here. One of these, the regionally-rare worm eating warbler (*Helmitheros vermivorus*), may in fact have been heard on this visit, but was not confirmed. This species is extremely scarce as a nesting species in the Piedmont, where it occurs particularly in association with steep, north-facing slopes covered with mountain laurel, an excellent example of which occurs on the city-owned land bordering the reservoir. Another regionally-rare species associated with steep slopes, the broad-winged hawk (*Buteo platypterus*), is commonly seen just upstream along the Little River (Tom Krakauer, Museum of Life and Sciences, pers. comm.) and should also be looked for as a nesting species within the gorge.

Wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) is also frequently seen in this area (Jane Korest, pers. comm.; Tom Krakauer, pers. comm.). This species is associated with fairly large tracts of undeveloped habitat, which occur both along the steep slopes of the gorge and nearby tracts of fairly hilly terrain (a part of which was identified as the Little River Uplands by Sutter, 1987). Other wide-ranging species associated with extensive forests have also been reported along the upper reaches of the Little River, including barred owls (*Strix varia*), pileated woodpeckers (*Dryocopus pileatus*) and possibly long-tailed weasel (*Mustela frenata*)<sup>2</sup>. Black vulture (*Coragyps atratus*), state Special Concern, and striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*), which is generally rare within the Triangle region, are also frequent within this area, but are associated more with the rural landscape than with the extensive woodlands.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE FLORA:

At the Saw Mill Hole Bluffs, L-2, site, steep slopes on both the north and south sides of a rocky river with numerous little waterfalls and pools result in a very scenic site. The slopes are

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<sup>2</sup> Tom Krakauer has observed road-killed weasels along Guess Road in this vicinity (pers. comm.); they could, however, have been mink, which should be fairly common in this area.